4th of July Address 2006

Welcome to Carmel's annual 4th of July celebration! It is wonderful to see so many families and friends gathered together as a community to celebrate the anniversary of our nation's independence.

As Americans we are ever conscious of the sacrifices made to keep our nation free but even more poignant in this time of war are the sacrifices that are still being made today in order to spread democracy throughout the world. The pride we all share in our great nation has been accentuated over the last few years as we are constantly and vividly reminded that there are parts of the world where dictators and monarchs still do not allow their people to be free.

The birth of our nation was unique because it is the first time in history that a people affirmed that they would no longer be governed by tyrants, but rather choose their own leaders. No other nation on earth has had the power and influence that the United States of America has had. Indeed, our country's strength has been and always will be in our people who deeply cherish their God given freedoms.

In the words of President George W. Bush

"Americans are a free people, who know that freedom is the right of every person and the future of every nation. The liberty we prize is not America's gift to the world; it is God's gift to humanity."

My wife, Liz, and I had the chance to attend an Official Dinner at the White House last week, with the President and Mrs. Bush and the Prime Minister of Japan. Having that rare opportunity, especially so close to the 4th of July, was an honor and really makes celebrating our nation's independence more meaningful.

Earlier today in the parade, you saw soldiers who have returned or are on leave from serving in Iraq, Afghanistan and Bosnia to fight for freedom on the other side of the globe. It is because of people like them, who volunteer to leave the comforts of their families and professions that we can continue to enjoy our freedom. We are grateful for their return and pray for the safe return of all the other men and women still serving overseas. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the soldiers who continue to fight in the name of freedom and to their families who bravely support them in this endeavor.

I hope you take a moment to thank those who have served and are still serving to protect and preserve our freedoms. God Bless them and God Bless America.